

**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
February 4, 2008
Room W130, West Office, Building, State Capitol Complex**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chair
Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-Chair
Sen. Margaret Dayton
Sen. Mike Dmitrich
Sen. Valentine
Rep. Roger Barrus
Rep. Jack Draxler
Rep. Carl Duckworth
Rep. Kerry W. Gibson
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. John G. Mathis
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Steve Sandstrom

STAFF: Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst
Linda Service, Committee Secretary

Note: A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Rep. Ferry called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

Request for Funding: Rep. Holdaway

Rep. Holdaway presented a request for funding trails within the state. The Governor's Office sees the need for trails in terms of economic development, quality of life, and constituent request. Rep. Holdaway asked the committee consider the request as a priority and look at it favorably. He responded to committee questions.

State Fair Presentation

Lorin Moench commented on the success of the last state fair which had increased attendance. The infrastructure remains a concern and a request was made for funds to cover the arena which would supplement income for the fair. Mike Porter, Treasurer, requested the committee's continued support in maintaining funding and requested an additional appropriation to fund the arena cover. Rep. Gowans and Rep. Hendrickson spoke to the need for the arena cover to encourage events at the fair park and answered questions and concerns of committee members.

Department of Agriculture and Food: Analyst Presentation

Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst, presented the Budget Brief - Department of Agriculture and Food. The Department is responsible for the administration of Utah's agricultural laws.

The 2005 Legislature provided an ongoing appropriation from the General Fund for mosquito abatement. The Department has indicated that 45% of the appropriation is sufficient to cover the needs of the Mosquito Abatement Districts. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee make the following reallocations of General Funds from the General Administration Program and fund other Subcommittee priorities: 1) a one-time \$182,600 for FY 2008, and 2) an ongoing \$182,600 for FY 2009.

The Utah's Own program was funded with one time appropriations. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place on the priority list a request for one-time appropriation of \$250,000 from the General Fund.

Japanese beetles were discovered in the Orem City area in 2006. A team of experts formed by the Department determined the only method for total eradication was chemical treatment of the area. The Department is requesting for FY 2008 a supplemental appropriation of \$200,000 from the General Fund. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place this request on the priority list.

The Chemistry/Dairy Laboratory is requesting funding to meet the increased workload, as well as increased costs for performing laboratory tests. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place on the priority list a request for ongoing appropriation of \$100,000 from the General Fund. The funding will be used to hire a microbiologist/chemist and to cover costs for additional testing.

There have been no staff increases for the Bedding, Quilted Clothing and Upholstered Furniture Program since 1991, while the workload has increased significantly. The Department is requesting additional funding to hire one new employee. This request is intended to be funded by the increase in license fees collected by this program. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee provide for FY 2009 the following funding from Dedicated Credits: 1) \$17,000 one time appropriation for the purchase of a vehicle and a computer; and 2) \$37,000 ongoing appropriation for the compensation of the new employee and current expenses.

The Analyst commented on the Issue Brief - Agriculture - Fees and answered questions from the committee.

MOTION: Rep. Gibson moved to adopt the minutes of January 28, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

Agency Presentation

Leonard Blackham, Commissioner, presented an overview of the war on cheat grass and the

need to control and eradicate the weed to limit catastrophic wildfires and improve land and environmental health. Questions and concerns from committee members were addressed. Kevin Carter, Director of SITLA, and Rick Sprott, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, urged support of funding for the program. Sen. Stowell spoke in support of funding.

Commissioner Blackham discussed the success of Utah's Own program, the need for increased funding for the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, the request for an additional FTE in Bedding and Upholstery, the success and continued concern for the eradication of the Japanese beetle, and the importance of the emergency reseeding of the lands burned in the summer of 2007, along with other funding concerns. He responded to questions from the committee.

Request for Funding: Sen. Dmitrich presented a request for Castle Resource Conservation Development Council in Emery County to fund housing for 1,200 boy scouts who will be in the county in June to work on controlling tamarisk on the San Rafael River and Joe's Valley Reservoir.

Department of Agriculture and Food continued presentation

Gordon Younkens , Executive Vice President of the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, outlined the administrative organization of the Districts and the importance of the partners. He requested the committee maintain the base budget, along with a cost of living increase. In addition, Mr. Younkens supported funding for fire prevention.

Rhonda Miller, Director of AgrAbility of Utah, Utah State University, explained the design of the program is to enable farmers and ranchers with disabilities to remain in agriculture. The goal is to bridge the gap between the medical field and getting people back to work in agriculture.

Tom Baldwin, Director of the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, requested funding to increase pathology shortage and to hire an administrative assistant. He responded to committee members.

Debra Spielmaker, Director of Agriculture in the Classroom, Utah State University, presented handouts. The purpose of the program is to promote knowledge of agriculture and the importance of it in the state. She elaborated on the success of the program in classrooms through the state.

Funding Request: Rep. Ferry

Rep. Ferry discussed H.B. 362 which is a bill to modify the Motor and Special Fuel Tax Act by amending provisions relating to the off-highway vehicle refund. The legislation allows removal

of the cap on a percentage of motor fuel tax revenue. Those funds will not go to the Department of Transportation but will come to the committee to maintain OHV trails.

Sen. Stowell assumed the chair.

Funding Request: Rep. Menlove

Rep. Menlove explained that the states of Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah have formed a group of weed control specialist to control weeds in Box Elder and Cache Counties along the border. In the past, Idaho has funded Utah's portion of this program but is now asking Utah to participate. She asked the committee to fund this request and responded to committee questions.

Funding Request: Sen. Stowell

Sen. Stowell summarized the appropriation requests and asked for feedback for committee members.

MOTION: Sen. Dayton moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Rep. Ben Ferry, Co-Chairman

Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chairman

